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## DICKENS' LIFE:

### CONCLUSION.

THE Life of Charles Dickens, as written by Mr Forster, has appeared in detachments—not the most satisfactory way of presenting a biography. What was contained in the first and second volumes of the work has been already noticed in these pages; and we now proceed to say something of the third and concluding volume, which has recently made its appearance.

In this last volume, the biographer glances at what he could not well escape, the painful incident of Dickens putting away his wife and mother of his children, for no other assigned reason than mutual incompatibility of feeling. The discovery of this incompatibility must be allowed to have come rather late in the day. The circumstance is one with which no properly constituted mind can sympathise, more particularly when it is known, as we happen to know, that Mrs Dickens is a person of amiable temperament, lady-like in manners, and wholly irreproachable in her life and conversation. We say it sorrowfully, this affair, which Dickens ostentatiously, and even offensively obtruded on public notice, forms, with concurrent and well-known circumstances, the sad blot on his character. How a man with so many good qualities should have so conducted himself, has appeared almost inexplicable. His behaviour is perhaps significant of the mental peculiarity, that in virtue of his acknowledged abilities he considered himself entitled to do as he liked in matters which are usually regulated by a certain prescribed canon of decency and propriety. Surely no apology can be offered for what is in effect a public outrage, a blazoned defiance of all ordinary rules of conduct, for such was his treatment of his wife. Nor is it well that the greatest distinction in literature or art—any amount of popularity—should be pleaded as an exemption from the plain rules of moral and social responsibility. If there be any extenuation, it is, that Dickens was in a degree intoxicated with universal applause, as well as spoiled by

the sycophants who hung about him, and sanctioned his vagaries. A certain 'restlessness of character' may likewise have had something to do with it. I am 'very human,' he acknowledged in the speech he made before departing for America. Accepting that meagre avowal of infirmity, we gladly drop the subject.

In the third volume of the Life, Mr Forster, we think, dwells too much on what this and that critic has said of Dickens' works. Who cares for these criticisms, or even for glowing eulogies on writings with which the world has long ago made up its mind? So sensitive was Dickens with respect to the feelings of others, that when he had painted a certain grotesque little oddity of his acquaintance (safe, as he imagined, from recognition) in Miss Moucher, and she wrote to him to complain of it, his grief and pain were excessive. Not only did he strive to shew her how all his characters were composite—that is, made out of many people—and never individual, and that in her own case this was as marked as in others, but, when she still remained unsatisfied as respects the moral characteristics attributed to her fancy portrait, he altered his whole scheme as respected it, so that nothing but an agreeable impression was left. In all Dickens' works there are indeed but three instances in which a personal likeness can be said to have been intended, though in a hundred cases the truth to nature may have suggested such. These are Mr Fang, the police magistrate; the alderman who meant 'to put down suicide;' and Harold Skimpole. The last case is the only one in which any harm was done, or, if punishment was inflicted on the other two (which seems unlikely, for the originals had hides of iron), it was richly deserved. As a rule, Dickens was careful not to offend in this way in proportion to the immense temptation that beset him to do so. 'A dreadful thought occurs to me,' he writes, in allusion to a common friend—'How brilliant in a book!' But in the particular case of Leigh Hunt, the temptation proved irresistible. Under the name of Harold Skimpole, he was reproduced to the life, with all his 'airy gaieties' and incapacity for business matters

portrayed as faithfully as features in a photograph. Dickens loved the man, as all who knew him loved him, and his apology was tender and characteristic. Wanting certain fascinating foibles for the man he had invented, he confesses that those of Hunt occurred to him, and 'for the pleasure it afforded me, as I have since often grieved to think, to find a delightful manner reproducing itself under my hand, I yielded to the temptation of too often making the character speak like my old friend.' It is quite possible, indeed, that the evil qualities of Skimpole may have been painted in darker colours in order to make the *unlikeness* more visible. Nobody who knew Hunt could have identified him with *them*; only, unfortunately, those who did not know him heard that the picture was intended for him, and accepted it as a portrait in all its details. Of the novel in which it figures, *Bleak House*, one character, that of the crossing-sweeper Jo, seems to have made the deepest pathetic impression of any he created. 'To my mind,' wrote the late Dean Ramsay of Edinburgh, 'nothing in the field of fiction is to be found in English literature surpassing the death of Jo.'

In 1855-56, Dickens resided in Paris, from which he sends the most charming descriptions of social life. He was superintending there the publication of the French edition of what M. Hachette, the bookseller, would term his *Romances*, and, of course, met every person of distinction. At Scribe's, the dramatist, he was entertained very frequently; a man with a splendid fortune, made by his pen, and yet as anxious to get away from his table to see one of his own pieces brought out on the stage, as though it had been his first instead of his *four hundredth*. Auber—'a stolid little elderly man with a petulant manner,' who told Dickens he had once lived at Stock Noonton (Stoke Newington) to study English, but had forgotten it all—was a frequent guest at Scribe's. When Louis-Philippe presented him to the Queen, she said: 'We are such old acquaintances through M. Auber's works, that an introduction is quite unnecessary.' Lamartine, who always spoke of Dickens as *un des grands amis de son imagination*, he describes as 'highly prepossessing, and with a sort of calm passion about him, very taking indeed.' At Madame Viardot's (the sister of Malibran), Dickens met George Sand. 'I suppose it to be impossible to imagine anything more unlike my preconceptions than the illustrious Sand. . . . Just the kind of woman in appearance whom you might suppose to be the Queen's monthly nurse.'

Of the famous Emile de Girardin and his entertainments, he thus writes: 'No man unacquainted with my determination never to embellish or fancy such accounts could believe in the description I shall let off when we meet of dining at Emile Girardin's—of the three gorgeous drawing-rooms, with ten thousand wax-candles in golden sconces, terminating in a dining-room of unprecedented magnificence, with two enormous transparent plate-glass doors in it, looking (across an ante-chamber full of

clean plates) straight into the kitchen, with the cooks in their white paper-caps dishing the dinner. From his seat in the midst of the table, the host (like a giant in a fairy story) beholds the kitchen, and the snow-white tables, and the profound order and silence there prevailing. Forth from the plate-glass doors issues the banquet—the most wonderful feast ever tasted by mortal; at the present price of truffles, that article alone costing (for eight people) at least five pounds. On the table are ground glass jugs of peculiar construction, laden with the finest growth of champagne and the coolest ice. With the third course is issued port wine (previously unheard of in a good state on this continent), which would fetch two guineas a bottle at any sale. The dinner done, oriental flowers in vases of golden cobweb are placed upon the board. With the ice is issued brandy, buried for a hundred years. To that succeeds coffee, brought by the brother of one of the *convives* from the remotest East, in exchange for an equal quantity of Californian gold-dust. . . . All this time the host perpetually repeats: "Ce petit dîner ci n'est que pour faire la connaissance de Monsieur Dickens; il ne compte pas; ce n'est rien." And even now I have forgotten to set down half of it—in particular, the item of a far larger plum-pudding than ever was seen in England at Christmas-time, served with a celestial sauce, in colour like the orange blossom, and in substance like the blossom powdered and bathed in dew, and called in the *carte* (*carte* in a gold frame like a little fish-slice to be handed about): "Hommage à l'illustre écrivain d'Angleterre." That illustrious man staggered out at the last drawing-room door, speechless with wonder, finally; and even at that moment his host, holding to his lips a chalice set with precious stones, and containing nectar distilled from the air that blew over the fields of beans in bloom for fifteen summers, remarked: "Le dîner que nous avons eu, mon cher, n'est rien—il ne compte pas—il a été tout-à-fait en famille—il faut dîner (en vérité, dîner) bientôt. Au plaisir! Au revoir! Au dîner!"

At this wonderful table, Dickens met equally wonderful people; among them a little man, who, eight years previously, was a shoeblack, reputed to be the richest man in France, having ascended with rapidity up the usual ladder of the Bourse. 'By merely observing that perhaps he might come down again, I clouded so many faces as to render it clear to me that *everybody present* was at the same game for some stake or other. Such crashes have to be staved off every week as have not been seen since Law's time.' But the most charming letters which this volume contains are without doubt those written from Boulogne. 'My house here is on a great hillside, backed up by woods of young trees. It faces the Haute Ville, with the ramparts and the unfinished cathedral, which capital object is exactly opposite the windows. On the slope in front, going steep down to the right, all Boulogne is piled and jumbled about in a very picturesque manner. The view is charming—closed in at last by the tops of swelling hills; and the door is within ten minutes of the post-office, and within a quarter of an hour of the sea. The garden is made in terraces up the hillside, like an Italian garden, the top walks being in the before-mentioned woods.

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The best part of it begins at the level of the house, and goes up at the back a couple of hundred feet, perhaps. There are at present thousands of roses all about the house, and no end of other flowers. There are five great summer-houses, and (I think) fifteen fountains—not one of which (according to the invariable French custom) ever plays. The house is a doll's house of many rooms; it is one story high, with eight-and-thirty steps up and down—tribune-wise—to the front door—the noblest French demonstration I have ever seen, I think. Besides a picture of this house in the dining-room, there was a plan of the property (his landlord always called it 'the property') in the hall. 'It looks about the size of Ireland; and to every one of the extraordinary objects there is a reference with some portentous name. There are fifty-one such references, including the Cottage of Tom Thumb, the Bridge of Austerlitz, the Bridge of Jena, the Hermitage, the Bower of the Old Guard, the Labyrinth (I have no idea which is which); and there is guidance to every room in the house, as if it were a place on that stupendous scale that, without such a clue, you must infallibly lose your way, and perhaps perish of starvation between bedroom and bed-room.'

On the pier at Boulogne, Dickens saw a shabby-looking man, who, in taking leave of a certain generous Englishman about to go on board the packet, observed: 'I shall not have a good dinner again till you come back.' This was Hudson, once the Railway King.

Of the serial which he was writing about this time, an anecdote is recorded, which may be termed historical. When Bismarck and Jules Favre met under the walls of Paris, on pretence of finding some basis of negotiation, there was a third man with them, Von Moltke, who took no part in the discussion, but occupied himself in reading *Little Dorrit*. 'Who can doubt,' observes Mr Forster, 'that the chapter on *How not to do it* was then absorbing the old soldier's attention?'

The book before us is so immense that it is hardly possible to do more than pick out some of the plums, to give a sample to our readers of its general richness. Of the extent of the influence of his writings and of their effect upon even the most ragged souls, the following is a curious instance. 'Twelve or thirteen years ago,' writes an American gentleman to Mr Forster, 'I crossed the Sierra Nevada mountains as a government surveyor under a famous frontiersman and civil engineer—Colonel Lander. We were too early by a month, and became snow-bound just on the very summit. Under these circumstances it was necessary to abandon the wagons for a time, and drive the stock (mules) down the mountains to the valleys where there was a pasturage and running water. This was a long and difficult task, occupying several days. On the second day, in a spot where we expected to find nothing more human than a grizzly bear or an elk, we found a little hut, built of pine-boughs and a few rough boards clumsily hewn out of small trees with an axe. The hut was covered with snow many feet deep, excepting only the hole in the roof which served for a chimney, and a small pit-like place in front to permit egress. The occupant came forth to hail us and solicit whisky and tobacco. He was dressed in a suit made entirely of flour-sacks, and was curiously labelled on various parts of his person "Best family flour, extra." His

head was covered by a wolf's skin drawn from the brute's head—with the ears standing erect in a fierce alert manner. He was a most extraordinary object, and told us he had not seen a human being for four months. He lived on bear and elk meat and flour, laid in during his short summer. Emigrants in the season paid him a kind of ferry-toll. I asked him how he passed his time, and he went to a barrel and produced *Nicholas Nickleby* and *Pickwick*. I found he knew them almost by heart. He did not know, or seem to care, about the author; but he gloried in Sam Weller, despised Squeers, and would probably have taken the latter's scalp with great skill and cheerfulness. For Mr Winkle he had no feeling but contempt, and, in fact, regarded a fowling-piece as only a toy for a squaw. He had no Bible; and perhaps if he practised in his rude savage way all Dickens taught, he might less have felt the want even of that companion.' Of Dickens' success with more polished readers, it will be sufficient to say that an American publisher thought it worth his while to give him, for *George Silverman's Explanation* and *A Holiday Romance*, which, combined, only occupied the space of one-half of his monthly numbers, and which took him only a few days to compose, the sum of a thousand pounds.

One statement will appear to many of Dickens' hearers as very surprising. During the latter course of his readings, he learned them all by heart, so as to have no mechanical drawback in looking for the words. 'I have tested,' says he, 'all the serious passion in them by everything I know; made the humorous points much more humorous; corrected my utterance of certain words; cultivated a self-possession not to be disturbed; and made myself master of the situation.' It is no wonder that he took such pains with what was bearing for him more golden fruit than even the most popular of his writings; and this, too, in England only, which was destined in this matter to fall short indeed of the Hesperian crop that awaited him in America. At first, it was Australia that seemed likely to secure his services—an offer of ten thousand pounds having been made to him to read there for eight months; but in the end he decided upon America, and though even still better terms were there proposed to him, to take the risk of the undertaking solely upon his own shoulders. The event more than justified his choice. During the six months he remained on the other side of the Atlantic, notwithstanding the enormous expenses (upwards of thirteen thousand pounds) incidental to his readings, he cleared no less a sum than twenty thousand pounds! The chief difficulty of his agent was to dispose of the tickets to legitimate purchasers, for though he made it a rule never to sell more than six to any one person, the speculators hired men to buy for them, and made it almost impossible to hear him without paying such prices as seem fabulous. In many cases five pounds were paid for a three-dollar seat. Let one scene suffice for all: "At Brooklyn, I am going to read in Mr Ward Beecher's chapel, the only building there available for the purpose. You must understand that Brooklyn is a kind of sleeping-place for New York, and is supposed to be a great place in the money way. We let the seats pew by pew! the pulpit is taken down for my screen and gas! and I appear out of the vestry in canonical form! These ecclesiastical entertainments come off on the

evenings of the 16th, 17th, 20th, and 21st of the present month." His first letter after returning to New York (9th of January), made additions to the Brooklyn picture. "Each evening an enormous ferry-boat will convey me and my state-carriage (not to mention half-a-dozen wagons, and any number of people, and a few score of horses), across the river to Brooklyn, and will bring me back again. The sale of tickets there was an amazing scene. The noble army of speculators are now furnished (this is literally true, and I am quite serious), each man, with a straw mattress, a little bag of bread and meat, two blankets, and a bottle of whisky. With this outfit, they lie down in line on the pavement the whole of the night before the tickets are sold; generally taking up their position at about ten. It being severely cold at Brooklyn, they made an immense bonfire in the street—a narrow street of wooden houses—which the police turned out to extinguish. A general fight then took place; from which the people farthest off in the line rushed bleeding when they saw any chance of ousting others nearer the door, put their mattresses in the spots so gained, and held on by the iron rails. At eight in the morning Dolby appeared with the tickets in a portmanteau. He was immediately saluted with a roar of 'Halloa! Dolby! So Charley has let you have the carriage, has he, Dolby? How is he, Dolby? Don't drop the tickets, Dolby! Look alive, Dolby! &c.' in the midst of which he proceeded to business, and concluded (as usual) by giving universal dissatisfaction." At no reading did he clear less than three hundred and fifteen pounds, while at New York the net profits sometimes reached five hundred pounds. Upon the whole, it may be calculated that his readings in America and England must have realised for him little less than forty-five thousand pounds. It is not too much to say, however, that in the end they cost him his life. The fatigue, incident to these dramatic performances—for such they really were—was enormous, and the reserve of strength upon which they drew was small. The 'restlessness' which was always 'driving' him to new excitements, was doubtless but a symptom of the disease at work within him, while his want of rest would of itself have destroyed a man of a less vigorous frame. His panacea for it was to get up and tire himself out by exercise, and this he would do sometimes by leaving his bed at two in the morning after a hard day's work, and walking thirty miles into the country before breakfast! For years and years he suffered from a dreadful pain in his foot, which Sir Henry Thompson in vain pointed out to him was a warning not to be disregarded; and even when his eyesight began to play him false, he could not be convinced but that it was owing to some temporary derangement, but walked, and read, and wrote to his uttermost, as usual.

Dickens was popular to the last, both as a writer and a reader. *Edwin Drood*, the book on which he was finally engaged, and which he left unfinished, was bought by the Fifty Thousand as it left his fingers; and of his last Christmas number, there were sold no less than 255,380 copies. That he was the best letter-writer that England has yet seen, is as certain as that he was one of its best speakers, actors, and readers of modern times.

With the circumstances of his death, and how all England mourned it, very literally, from the Queen to the peasant, our readers must need be well

acquainted. Through dint of hard brain-work, he may be said to have perished before his time. He suddenly sunk on the evening of June 9, 1870, passing away at the age of fifty-eight years and four months.

## THE BEST OF HUSBANDS.

### CHAPTER XIII.—DISENCHANTMENT.

RICHARD MILBANK did not return to Rosebank either that day or the next, and by that time all Hilton knew it. His disappearance, though by no means mysterious, since he had announced his intention to depart, was a much debated topic. At the *Sans Souci*, among the older members, there was a good deal of lifting of eyebrows and shaking of heads: 'There was something more behind, you might depend upon it, which would not be long in coming out.' The less prudent prophets even entreated their friends, in whispers, to mark their words: 'It would be presently discovered that John Milbank was "let in" for a heap of money' through his scapegrace brother. The younger men were (as they imagined) more charitable: it was their openly expressed opinion that Dick had been signalled elsewhere by the flutter of a petticoat, and that they would see him back again in ten days, or a fortnight at farthest. He was impressionable, but his fervour was apt to cool within a very limited time. In the meanwhile, he was much missed, and genuinely regretted, in the card-room, notwithstanding that he had left no debts behind him. His handsome face had been pleasant to look upon, his reckless talk had had a genial glow about it, though but too often from forbidden fires. Some even held him as witty as old Roberts, though he had not that dry manner with him which makes a little joke go such a long way. It was agreed on all hands that Dennis Blake knew more about Milbank's whereabouts than he chose to tell, and he was cross-examined accordingly; and since he was foolish enough to take this in ill part, it was persisted in.

'Is it true, Denny, that you have quite ruined him, and given him back a little money, to take him beyond seas—as they say old Crockford used to do for his victims?'

'No, no,' said another; 'Blake would never do that. His favourite goose having laid its last golden egg, he has killed him, and sold the body.'

Whereupon, the economist referred to would scowl and mutter, and, in his excessive irritation, even play a wrong card. This he could ill afford to do, for, now that Dick was gone, he got very little plunder, but, on the contrary, like the ringed pelican, had daily to disgorge to others the prey that he had laboriously collected for his own benefit.

Outside the club, Richard was missed also, in many quarters. Tradesmen of all sorts—tailors, bootmakers, horsedealers—were making the most anxious inquiries about him. A jeweller wrote to Mr Thorne to inform him that a golden cross set with turquoises, that his daughter was wearing, and which had come out of his establishment, had not been paid for. To have to return a love-gift under these circumstances was 'rubbing the gilt off' with a vengeance, but Maggie complied with the suggestion without a murmur. It was thought a hard thing by the jeweller that John



Milbank did not offer to pay for it, which Thorne was by no means in a position to do.

As time went on, and still no news came of the missing man, public opinion set in against his brother upon this account—that he did not pay Richard's debts; though, as a matter of fact, he had not the money. His business, for the present, was crippled, and indeed was going on on credit, though there was little doubt of its eventual recovery.

Thorne did not hesitate to tell his daughter of all this; but he might have spared his breath; while her Richard was absent, and his fate unknown, all talk to his disparagement was wasted. She did not believe that he had gone away from her of his own free will, but feared for his personal safety; and while such an anxiety was on her mind, what mattered tradesmen's bills!

At last a day arrived which was destined to give her father a tremendous advantage.

'Maggie,' said he one morning, as they were at their work together, 'what would make you believe that Richard had given you up?'

She was so pale now that she could scarcely grow paler; but instead of pursuing her occupation, as it was her wont to do when the engraver pressed this theme, she desisted from it at once; her trembling fingers had refused their office.

'You have some news, father; what is it?'

'That cheque has been paid into the London bank.'

'I don't understand,' said she faintly: she did understand, poor soul, being well enough acquainted with such matters.

'Why, the hundred pounds that John gave to his brother on the night of his departure. It was an open cheque, but payable to order; and it has just come in with Richard's signature on the back of it. A man must be alive, you know, to sign a cheque. It is plain, therefore, that Richard is alive.'

'Thank God,' murmured Maggie humbly; but it was not a fervent ejaculation: the alternative, indeed, was not in her case to be fervently welcomed.

'It was very stupid of John,' continued the engraver, 'not to stop the cheque; but I suppose he was afraid of offending his brother. He has already telegraphed, it seems; and the reply from the bank is that it was presented by a stranger; so there is no clue. Only the fact is now certain that Richard is alive, and, for reasons of his own—and I have no doubt very good ones—has no wish to have any communication with you.'

There was a long pause, then Maggie said: 'Can I see the cheque?'

'It is here, my child; I asked John to send it for your own satisfaction.'

Her satisfaction! Does the ship-captain use that phrase when he writes to tell some widowed mother that her only lad has perished in the pitiless sea! If Richard had really signed that cheque, he was not dead indeed, but it was almost certain proof that he had deserted her. She took it from her father, and with practised and tearless eye examined the endorsement. It was her lover's—or what once had been her lover's—hand: no forger could have ever deceived her *there*.

'Are you convinced at last, my poor lassie?' inquired the engraver tenderly.

'That Richard signed this cheque? Yes, father.'

'And does not the other thing follow—that he has given you up? Or will nothing ever make you believe that?'

'Nothing; unless I hear it from his own lips.' She rose, and walked slowly to the door; then dragged herself up-stairs to her own room; and having shut herself in, dropped into a chair, and burst into a passion of tears.

'O Richard, Richard, you are breaking a heart that only beats for you!'

She came down an hour afterwards and resumed her work as though nothing had happened; her eyes, her ears, were quick as ever, but all that they took in shaped itself with reference to her lost lover: the 'perishable' ink, in experiments with which her father chanced to be engaged that morning, reminded her of Richard's vows; so fixed and stable to all seeming, and yet so unstable and fleeting; nay, the parallel was even more complete, for in neither case was there any fading away, but, in a moment, all was blank on heart and paper. The very wintry wind that huddled the snow against the window-pane seemed to breath cold farewells, not from the grave, but worse, from lips estranged!

Herbert Thorne knew nothing of such thoughts. He had forgotten, or perhaps had never known, what grief women are capable of concealing; what mortal wounds they will hide from kith and kin, rather than confess their pain, when a once-loved hand has inflicted them. When Maggie said that she would never credit that Richard had forsaken her till he told her so himself, her father had believed her.

If this man should die, then, she would be a mourner for him through all her youthful days; and if he lived, and should return to claim her promise, she would be a mourner still—for her own sake. Beneath the engraver's methodical manner and outspoken ways, there lay a heart, limited, indeed, in the sphere of its affections, but tender as a girl's towards all it did love, and that all was Maggie. He had borne misfortune, disappointment in his most cherished hopes, and bitter humiliations in his calling, without a murmur; but they had set their mark upon his being: he felt old age creeping on apace, and something worse than old age; he had had warnings, unrevealed to Maggie, but which a doctor had translated for him, that a day might come, even before the appointed Fatal One, when his deft fingers should ply no more their busy work; when blessed Toil should no more offer its cup of Lethe; when he should be no longer the bread-winner, but only the bread-eater. It had been his one desire to see his daughter placed on some safe coign of vantage—the wife of some well-to-do and honest man, so that the wave of Want should never reach her, and chill her with its spray, when he himself should be powerless to avert it. And now this modest hope lay shattered within him. Maggie was thoroughly resolved to sacrifice herself to an idol, with front of brass and feet of clay—to throw herself away upon a selfish reprobate. He had felt very bitter about it, as well as sad, but the bitterness was over now, and the sadness had turned to blank despair. If he had told her all this, she would perhaps have flung her arms about him, and confessed her error. But he was reticent by habit, and besides, too worn and broken in spirit to risk a new repulse. Silence may be golden, but

how many a life has been worse than lost, when one word of nature's promptings would have saved it!

It was Maggie's custom every afternoon to repair to Rosebank, generally in her father's company, about the time when John returned home from business to inquire if there were any news of Richard; and at the usual hour, she rose, and put on her shawl and bonnet.

'Won't you go with me, father? I am sure you have been working long enough: you look tired and pale. It has ceased snowing, and the fresh air will do you good.'

'Not to-day, Maggie.'

His words were always few, and decisive; but if her thoughts had not been elsewhere—hoping against hope that John might have something comforting to tell her—she would have noticed that his tone was very tremulous. When she left the house, he went to the window, and followed her with his eyes to the corner of the street; then sighing, resumed his seat, but not his toil. He sat him down to think—but to think was to be full of sorrows and leaden-eyed despairs. We lavish our pity, both in life and books, upon the disappointments of youth and the unhappiness of lovers; but we ought to reserve it rather for those who, without the strength of youth to support them, have lost not only happiness, but hope itself.

Maggie was a rapid walker, and when she had cleared the town, she saw before her on the road a woman going in the same direction: her steps were slow because of some burden that she carried, and she seemed to progress with difficulty. Where could she be going, thought Maggie, so late in the dull dark afternoon, and when the laden clouds were menacing more snow so unmistakably? At each of the scattered villas on the way, she expected to see her stop, and it was with genuine compassion that she observed her pass by the last, save Rosebank itself, whereby she knew she must be bound on a long journey. By this time she had overtaken her, and perceived that she was about her own age, and very pretty, but painfully delicate, and evidently of frail and feeble frame. Her breast was the cradle of a little babe, whose peevish cries she was vainly endeavouring to soothe.

'I hope you are not going far this bitter evening?' said Maggie kindly.

'I am not going far,' echoed the girl sullenly, and huddling her cloak about her, as though with some vague intention of concealing her living burden.

The movement was not lost upon Maggie, who hurried on, and presently reached Rosebank. As she turned to enter the gate, she looked back, and saw that the girl had stopped also. Perhaps she had meant to beg at the cottage, and would now be deterred from doing so by seeing her enter? Maggie glanced at the threatening sky, and her heart smote her for the evanescence of her pity for this poor creature and her innocent child; and, instead of ringing the bell, she walked hastily back and addressed her.

'Did you want anything, my good girl?' said she. 'I am known at yonder house, and can procure you there, at least, a meal, if you stand in need of it.'

'I am not hungry, thank you,' was the cold reply.

'But see! it has already begun to snow again;

will you not step in for shelter till the storm is over?'

'I am used to bad weather—and worse!' answered the girl, with a trembling of the lips that was meant for a cynical smile.

'But your child?' urged Maggie tenderly.

The girl burst into tears. 'Yes; my child has a right to shelter in that house,' answered she with vehemence; 'and I am going there to claim it.'

'Of whom?' inquired Maggie faintly.

'Of its father. You say you are known there. Can you tell me, then, whether Mr Milbank has returned?'

'Mr Milbank!' Maggie's heart felt like a stone; her limbs trembled beneath her. 'Which Mr Milbank?'

'Are there two?' answered the girl simply. 'I only know of one. I have not seen him for weeks, nay, months; and I have been ill and weak, and dared not write, and now they tell me he has gone away, no one knows whither.'

'Do you mean Richard Milbank?'

'O yes. Who else? You are known at Rosebank, you say, and must know him.'

'Yes; I know him,' answered Maggie gravely.

It had taken her years to do so, but the recognition had come at last: he stood before her a faithless breaker of women's hearts.

'Have I done mischief?' cried the girl in affrighted tones. 'Are you his sister, that you look so pained and angry?'

'No; I am nothing to him, nor he to me.'

'But you can tell me if it is true that he has left us—his babe, the very image of himself—look you!' She drew her cloak aside, that Maggie might look upon the child; and she did so, but with such a hard and searching gaze, that the girl shrunk back from her, exclaiming: 'You would not hurt him?'

'God forbid!' said Maggie hoarsely.

'Ah, you are kind, and would not tread us under foot, as some do. I am a sinful girl, but then I loved him, and he loved me, or else he is perjured.' Then, with haggard face and eager eyes, she added: 'Is he really gone? Can he have deserted us for ever, think you?'

'It is possible,' answered Maggie slowly. 'He has deserted others.'

'Nay; but not like me and this one. He was his father, and he should have been my husband; a score of times he vowed to marry me. I would not come here begging to his door, to shame him thus, but for his own child's sake; for if the mother starve, the babe must die.'

'You shall not starve,' said Maggie.

'Will his people, yonder, help us, think you?'

'I don't know. You must not go there: come back with me, and shew me where you live.'

'It is a very poor place,' hesitated the other: 'they have turned us out of the rooms he took for me.'

'No matter how poor it be, let me see it.' And yielding to her stronger will, the sobbing girl turned back towards the town.

Within an hour of leaving her father's house, Maggie stood once more before its door; but in that time a revolution had taken place within her mind that years of ordinary events could not have effected. It was as if to the wound of which she had languished the actual canterly had been suddenly applied, and though still suffering tortures, she felt in a manner cured. To think that all the

while Richard had been paying his vows to her, and protesting his fidelity, he had been promising marriage to another, was a reflection that turned her wholesome blood to gall. The very remembrance of his caresses was hateful to her, now that she knew that they had been lavished elsewhere. Ignorant of the world, though so sagacious in more than one of its useful callings, his infidelity appeared to her something monstrous and abnormal. Had her position in life been a more lowly one, or if it had been higher, or if her bringing-up, even in her own condition, had been less exceptional, she would have been spared the shock of this revelation, and also, perhaps, would have missed its lesson; but her knowledge of life was as inferior to that of most girls of her own age as her intelligence was superior. How different she was from them may be best gathered from the fact, that as soon as the sudden passion-flush had passed, and reason had time to assert itself within her, she forgave her unconscious rival, or rather confessed to herself that she had nothing to forgive. Her first impulse had been to get the girl away from Rosebank, in order to save herself from a public mortification; but her honest heart had since been moved towards her with genuine pity. If she herself had been deceived by Richard—against whom every voice was warning her—was this poor girl to be blamed for having become his victim? Nay, if her tale was true, might not Richard, had it not been for her own sake—she would not say 'for the love of her,' for she now ignored it—have redressed her wrong, and married her, so that in a manner was not she herself to blame for this poor girl's desertion? Henceforth, at all events, she would do her best to serve her and her innocent child. In good actions, it has been said, the most wretched of mankind can find some comfort; our own cup of bitterness seems not so bitter when we strive to make that of others more palatable. Moreover, terrible as was this revelation to herself, the effects of it, she could not but reflect, would be welcome to her father, to whose loving appeals she had hitherto refused to listen; she would henceforward make up for her undutifulness by obedience to his every wish; indeed, for the future, what wishes could she ever entertain not in accordance with his own! Side by side, they would work together, undissociated by any secret thought: she would give herself heart and soul to him, sympathise with his aims, second them all she could, and if they should be successful, strive to find some happiness in his triumph.

Reader, has it not sometimes happened to you, when you have had occasion to resolve particularly upon a course of conduct, when your plans are laid, and the circumstances for which they are prepared lie, as it seems, plainly before you—the same as they did yesterday, and the day before, without a hint of change—that all this forethought has gone for nothing, or only for what thought is worth which can never be put in practice. Does it not seem, I say, as though Fate were jealous of feeble man's proposals, and resolute to flout them? While Maggie has her hand upon the door of home, where all that happens is known to her so well, and goes on with such methodical iteration, an empty carriage drives swiftly up to it, and stops. 'Is this Mr Thorne's house, please, miss?' asks the coachman.

'Yes,' says she, surprised, but not alarmed; why

should she be? 'Have you any message for him?'

'No, miss; but I have got my orders to wait here for my master, Dr Naylor, who has been summoned to see him.'

'Summoned to see him! What about?' cried Maggie, ringing nervously at the bell.

'Well, I don't rightly know, miss; but the man from the chemist's shop came running down to us, ten minutes ago, to say as Mr Thorne in Mitchell Street was took with a stroke. He told our cook it was summat of paralysis.'

## CHAPTER XIV.—STRUCK DOWN.

We hear much of the contrasts between rich and poor, and, Heaven knows, they are sharply defined and unmistakable enough; but there is another contrast not so defined, and therefore not so patent, in the social positions of our fellow-men, but which in the end is often as deplorable. This is caused by the presence, or absence, of what is vulgarly termed 'an independence'; that is, the possession of some sum of money, small or great, which is their own, and on which they can fall back upon for support in case of need. The barrister in good practice lives, during the holidays, next neighbour, at some seaside resort, to the country gentleman, who has chanced to bring his wife and children to the same place. The way of living of their two families is almost identical; you would set them down as being in the enjoyment of somewhat similar incomes; and very likely it may be so. Yet the difference between their pecuniary positions is in reality as great, perhaps greater than that which exists between the barrister and the humble lodging-house keeper of whose apartments he is the temporary tenant. For, if he sickens, or his practice falls away, poverty and want soon begin to press him sore; while, if he dies, ruin too often seizes upon those he has so tenderly nurtured, only to feel their fate the harder when it thus befalls. On the other hand, should the country gentleman decease, his girls have only his personal loss to deplore; it is not the prop of the house that has been snatched away from them; in the matter of material prosperity, they are as they were; while the daughters of their neighbour are no more their equals, but will have to work for scanty pay, for strangers, from youth to age. The occurrence is so common, that it excites but little remark. 'I see Brown of the Chancery Bar, or Brown the doctor, or Brown the vicar (as the case may be), is dead,' we say: 'I fear those nice girls of his will be left but badly off.'

Yet, but yesterday, Brown, to all outward seeming, was as prosperous as his friend Brown the county magistrate, and it would have been the height of presumption to pity his girls. Of course folks say: 'Why did he not insure his life?' and probably to some small extent—less than he should have done, but not much less, perhaps, considering what responsibility he would have incurred in undertaking a great premium—he did insure it. At all events, that little provision does but serve to break the fall of the suddenly descending Browns.

This reflection, indeed, would sadden us more if the downfall was less sudden and complete, since as it is they all go 'under,' as it were,

immediately; the ranks of society close up, and little or nothing more is heard of them, unless, indeed, one of their number happens to be fortunate enough to be taken into the family circle (yet not quite inside) of the country Browns—as their governess. This sad difference of lot does not commonly take place in the professional class while the breadwinner is yet alive; he may fail in brain or health a little without losing his means of livelihood altogether—indeed, in the case of Brown the vicar they remain to him, even if he be bedridden, and in other cases the invalid's friends and associates 'rally round him,' and something is done for the afflicted man; but in the lower middle class—that of the mechanic who works for weekly wage—a serious illness is almost as bad as a death-blow. There is but one step from competence to penury. It is small comfort, even to a selfish man, thus situated, to reflect that this misfortune is liable to occur not to him alone, but to nineteen-twentieths of those in his own calling. The little 'independence' is almost unknown among them, while the advantages of the 'benefit club' belong to a class below.

From the moment, therefore, that Herbert Thorne was stricken down by sudden sickness, the fortunes of the little household began to collapse rather than to wane. His weekly income had been better than that of many an unbeneficed clergyman, though it was largely taxed to defray the expenses of scientific experiments; and now it was absolutely nil. There was no in-coming at all, but all was outgoing—save what Maggie, who had the duty of sick-nurse to perform, could earn with her hands. It is the consideration of cases of this kind—which are as common as the toothache—which makes one smile contemptuously when the man of 'independent' means talks about 'hard times,' for he can never know what they are.

Maggie was very clever and assiduous; did not waste her wits or wages, like her father, upon impracticable theories; would have been the best helpmate and home-ruler that a diligent man could have taken to his bosom; and could have maintained herself at all times were health but granted to her; but the burden that was now cast upon her willing shoulders was greater than they could bear. The rent of the house, for one thing, would have swallowed up half her gains; and there were her father and the servant to feed, and the doctor to pay, and— But the list of what has to be provided for even in the most humble household is a long one, and would weary the comfortable reader; albeit every item of it as it flashed on poor Maggie's mind, was not merely a wearisome detail, but inflicted a pang as real and painful as the most sentimental woe ever endured by a heroine of romance.

She had found her father prostrate and powerless on his bed, unable even to shape her name, though he looked at her with an eloquence of love and sorrow that went beyond all power of words. And at the end of the terrible three months that followed, so far from being 'himself again,' of which Dr Naylor had given her hopes, he had not yet wholly recovered the use of his limbs—the power of getting about and helping himself—while, whether that once deft and diligent right hand should ever regain its cunning at all, was more than doubtful. Most fortunately, what work Maggie could do could be done at home, and she

had toiled by the sick man's bed all day without leaving him for an hour. He was not on any account to be 'worried' or made 'to think,' the doctor had said; so her talk had been always cheerful; she had sung to him his favourite songs—which her mother had taught her when a child—as soon as he was strong enough to hear them without tears; she had read to him also, whenever he had felt inclined, making up for the hours thus idly spent by work in her own room at night; and John Milbank had called every day, and sat with the old man, especially through that time when Maggie was compelled to go out to dispose of the proceeds of her handiwork, or for health's sake for a breath of fresh air. It was a hard life for her, yet in some respects, like all lives spent in the path of duty, it had not been without benefit to herself. She had learned from it that her affection for Richard had not only been misplaced, but selfish; and though it still existed within her, it was to be from henceforth subordinate to filial duty. Suppose she had married, and been forbidden by her husband to tend this beloved parent—would all Richard's protestations of devotion to herself, even had they been genuine, have consoled her, or acquitted her conscience for that unprofitable desertion? The doctor's questions as to the cause of her father's seizure had quivered like a barbed arrow in her very heart. Did he suffer from any mental trouble? Was he grieving for a disappointment, or had he been for any length of time in expectation of some calamity? She answered in the negative, but something within her seemed to protest against her words. Without acknowledging to herself that she had been the cause of his misfortune, her whole soul was bent upon reparation; and in the practice of self-sacrifice, she had found a balm for many things. Only at first, the shadow of the coming Want, of the inevitable hour in which her slender purse should not contain a coin, threw gloom upon her soul. What gloom, then, must it needs be throwing upon him who, lying upon his sick-bed with helpless hands, had little else to occupy his thoughts! Yet, since he never spoke of it, and always had a smile for her, she had begun to hope that Fate, while striking him with so pitiless a hand, had deadened her father's capabilities of pain in this respect, and that, like a child, he took all that was given to him, without concern as to the source from which it came; that Nature herself had backed the doctor's orders, that the invalid was not to be 'made to think.' It was not long, however, before she was undeceived. On the very first day that the engraver was moved down-stairs into the sitting-room, he looked about him with a surprised and troubled air.

'Maggie, darling,' he whispered feebly, 'how is it that all is here as when I left it?'

'Why not, dear father? What should not be here?'

He pointed to the costly scientific instruments which he loved as Norman William loved the tall deer. 'These would have brought money, darling, and you must have needed it sadly. How is it you have managed without it?'

Maggie's cheek shewed a faint blush in spite of herself. 'I borrowed a little,' answered she; 'we are to repay the loan as soon as you are able to work again.'

The engraver looked at his wasted right hand,

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still disobedient to his will. 'That is but poor security,' sighed he: 'there is but one man that I know of who would have advanced us anything upon it.'

'Well, father, he has done it, so what matters? Dr Naylor says you are not to worry yourself about business affairs.'

'It does not worry me to talk of John Milbank; it does me good.'

Maggie blushed deeper than ever; his words had a meaning for her which she strove to ignore.

'Tell me all about it, darling from the first.'

'When you were first taken ill, father, I could think of nothing else but that, and the question of how we should pay our way did not trouble me; besides, the doctor told me that you would soon be well again. But presently one little bill dropped in, and then another; and we began to owe for things that we had been used to settle for every week. Lucy's wages fell due too, and it seemed right to pay them before anything; and small as they were, they took my last shilling.'

'My poor Maggie!'

'Then the man called for the quarter's rent, and though he was civil enough, I knew it would not be so the next time; and others called who were not so civil. I had no idea how hard some folks could be.'

'But others were kind, Maggie; tell me about that.'

'John was very kind, father. He pretended that the price of goods, such as I supply, was raised in the market, and offered to dispose of them at higher prices; but I saw through that—here her voice began to tremble a little—and declined the aid that was but alms, however delicately bestowed.'

'And about the loan, Maggie?' continued the old man (for he looked old indeed now) after a long silence, during which he regarded her, while she worked on as usual, with yearning eyes. 'How was it he came to lend this money?'

'I think he saw that I was greatly troubled father; and once, when I went out to pay some one who had been very importunate, an instalment of his bill, I found the whole had been already settled by an unknown hand. When I taxed John with having paid it, he at first denied it, and then insisted that he was your debtor. You had lent his uncle money, he said, years ago, through which he had made his fortune, and since he was his heir, John owed it you.'

'But the money was paid, Maggie.'

'So I told him, father; but he answered that the obligation remained, and that, at all events, he must insist on your accepting from him a loan to the same amount as the debt originally incurred. I was very loath, but he urged what was but too true, that money must be had somehow; and if I parted with your books or instruments, they would be sold at a great sacrifice, and that, besides, you would be crippled for the want of them, when you should recover. So at last I took the money.'

'Why, that was a hundred pounds, lass. I know not how it can ever be repaid,' added he, looking at her wistfully.

'You were not to worry yourself about that, he said, answered Maggie hastily, 'but to repay it by instalments when it suited you; and besides, I have spent but very little of it; only, I thought it better to accept John's offer, handsome as it was, rather than be applying to him again and again, if

we should need to do so. It is so unpleasant to talk about money matters, even if one's friend is ever so kind—and indeed I think John was as embarrassed as myself.'

'Don't you think that was because he was dealing with you, Maggie? When he comes to mention it to myself he will have no such shyness.'

'Very likely, father,' answered she quietly: 'a man understands a man so much better than he understands a woman.'

Then Maggie worked on in silence with nimble fingers, and the old man moved slowly about the room among his favourite instruments, touching this and that in an absent and preoccupied manner.

'John tells me that nothing has been heard of his brother, Maggie,' said he at last; 'you have heard nothing yourself, I conclude; no letter, nor anything?'

'I have heard nothing, nor do I expect to hear,' was her calm reply.

'And if you did?' asked the engraver with significance.

'If I did, it would make no difference, father; I would never marry Richard now.—Don't ask me why,' added she with vehemence; 'don't speak to me upon the subject, if you would spare me pain; but if it is any comfort to you to know it; Richard'— Here something seemed to choke her speech, and she laid her hand upon her bosom, as if in pain.

'What! you love him no longer?' cried the engraver with eager joy.

'I did not say that,' exclaimed Maggie passionately; 'I wish to Heaven I could! But do not fear that I will ever be his wife.'

The old man tottered towards her, and stooping down, kissed her bowed forehead. 'The doctor need not come again to see me, darling; your words have done me more good than all his drugs.'

If it was so, the cure was obtained at the expense of the physician: as the mesmerist gives his own vital force to eke out that of his patient, so Maggie, it seemed, had parted with heart and hope to give them to her father, for the girl had fainted at her desk.

## A HALLUCINATION.

My aunt and cousins were going to Brighton for several weeks, and had asked me down to see them. As I was not certain on which day they intended to leave London, I thought I should call at my uncle's house in Westend Square, and inquire. When I rang the bell, the door was opened by a tall woman respectfully dressed in gray. She did not look at all like a servant, and seemed between forty and fifty. Her features were good, but masculine, and she was very pale, but her paleness was not unhealthy. To my inquiry if Mrs — was at home, she said: 'No; they have all gone;' and before I had time to ask when they left, the door was shut. I knew that my uncle did not intend leaving town till the dissolution of parliament, and that, when his family were from home, he generally staid at the *Palace Hotel*; so I went in search of him. I found he was staying there, but was not in. I then went to his club, but was unable to find him. I wished to know when I was expected at Brighton;

but as I was aware that I should be welcome at any time, my chief reason in looking for him was to find out who the strange woman was that was taking care of his house, as I could not get her face out of my head. I did not see him, however, and the next day I left for Brighton. I took the earliest opportunity of asking my aunt in whose charge she had left her house.

'There is no one in the house,' she said; 'it is locked up.'

I then told her that I had gone to the house; and described the woman who had opened the door, adding, that she was one of the strangest-looking women I had ever seen. My aunt said that I must be mistaken, as it was quite impossible there could be any one there. My cousins agreed with her, and asked me among other things, whether I had dined before going to the square.

'I know what he has done,' cried Amy, a smart child of eight—'he has rung the wrong bell.' This theory appeared to receive general acceptance; but I was not to be done out of my belief in this manner, and stuck firmly to my original assertion. My favourite cousin, Annie, was the only one who took my part, and said, that for all they knew, some one might have got into the house.

'If any one had got into the house,' said my aunt, 'it is quite evident that they would not open the door to any person who came to it.'

'But,' pleaded Annie, 'if they were there for no harm!'

'Nonsense,' said one of her sisters; 'it's an *hallucination*.' At this, they all laughed, and I joined them, though I was in no laughing mood.

As Annie had taken my part, she did not desert me, but telegraphed to her papa to go to their house, and ring the bell, knock at the door three times, and say 'Open sesame.' When she told us her message, she added: 'If there is any one in the house, they are certain to come for that; ' to which we all agreed. My uncle, who would do anything for his daughter, did as he was requested, and telegraphed back that all his efforts had made no impression on the door. I was then left alone. Annie sided with the rest in telling me I had made a mistake. I was unshaken, however, and the recollection of the strange appearance of the person who had opened the door made me feel very uncomfortable. I made some excuse to go up to town the next day, and determined to investigate the matter for myself. On arriving in London, I went at once to my uncle's house. I rang the bell, but no answer. I knocked, but all was still. I again rang furiously, and even kicked the door, but in vain. I began to think that I must, on the former occasion, have gone to the wrong door, and went out some distance from the house to look at it before leaving. The blinds were all down; but just as I was turning to go away, I saw a hand holding the bottom of one of them, and which was at once withdrawn. It was merely for an instant that I saw this, and I left, feeling rather sick.

I returned to Brighton the next day, and told what I had seen. I could not, however, affirm that

I had seen the hand with the same confidence as I had spoken about the woman. The action was so instantaneous, that I felt I might have been deceived; so that when my cousins began to cross-examine me on the subject, and shew its unlikelihood, I rather wavered. When I admitted that I had rung and knocked for about five minutes, without any one coming, they evidently thought that I was mistaken on both occasions, and had seen nothing. My aunt had not this time ventured to give any opinion. Much to my disgust, they then began to talk of people who had imagined they saw all sorts of strange things, till at last my aunt stopped them. She was looking very grave, and put numerous questions to me about my health. Was I quite certain I had not been reading too hard lately? My cousins understood her, and were silent. I saw Annie looking very pitifully at me. They evidently thought my mind was affected. This was more than I could bear, and I quite believed what they told me the next few days, that I was looking very unwell indeed. My uncle came down for a night. He took me aside, and began talking rather mysteriously. 'Young men,' he said, 'reading law in chambers ought to take great care of their health, and not overwork themselves.' I had not had a book in my hand for about a month, but I did not tell him so. He strongly advised me to take a tour on the continent. When I saw my aunt, she repeated what her husband had said. They had evidently had a conference about me. As I did feel a little unwell, and had no desire to stay among people who thought I was a little crazed, I replied, that I thought that a little travelling would do me good. I found some men whom I had known at college, who were going to Switzerland, and they asked me to join them. We spent three very pleasant weeks in rambling about, and then we went to Vienna. I saw many people I knew, and quite forgot why I had left England. The memory of that strange-looking woman never haunted me while I was away. I was away altogether about five weeks. The day after I returned to London, as I was going to Westend Square, to see if my uncle had returned before going to Scotland, the thought of what I had seen at his house darted into my mind. Just then I met a friend. 'Have you heard of the great robbery at your uncle's?' he said. I was unable to answer him. 'I have not heard particulars,' he continued, 'but it seems to have been a very wholesale one.' While they were at Brighton, the house had actually been gutted. Pictures, carpets, and even chairs had been taken away. In fact, almost every article that was portable had been carried off. There had been no plate left in the house, so that was the only thing of value that was saved. It could be seen that the burglars had actually lived in the house; they had made a raid on the wine-cellar, and had left the empty bottles in all corners of the house. They had left a well-written letter, thanking my uncle for the use of his house, and for what they had taken, and stating that on some future occasion they might pay him another visit. Not the slightest clue to the thieves was ever, so far as I am aware, discovered. The police did not allow the thing to get into the papers, as they thought it might hinder them in finding out the burglars. I expected some apologies for my statements having been doubted. Instead of that, however, I was

told it was very foolish of me not to have informed the police of what I had seen. The reader may judge for himself whether I was more to blame than those I did inform.

## IN DANGER.

## IN FOUR CHAPTERS.—CHAPTER III.

'My word, you're in luck, Masterton. A pleasure-voyage, with the chance of a rattling percentage on the profits of the transaction at the end of it, would be a deal more in my line than measuring out wet sand with a ten-foot rod, or hearing the thump of that monotonous old monkey-engine here,' said Leary, very disconsolately, as he and his comrade O'Dwyer stood beside me on the quay, puffing at their freshly kindled cheroots, and watching the approach of the *Suwarrow*, her sharp prow flinging up a miniature fountain into the sunny air as she cut swiftly through the water. Such, however, was not to be the case, since I was to be accompanied by the German clerk in spectacles, and by four or five carpenters or shipwrights, of whom two were English, and whose duty it would be to direct the construction of the raft, when the timber should have been dragged down to the beach. I made some laughing response to the discontented young Irishman, and then proceeded to summon Ali Sahib, who was sitting cross-legged on his little square of blue carpet, under the shadow of the nearest shed, and telling his amber beads with as much of serene composure as if the vessel in which we were to embark was not close at hand. The *Suwarrow* came steaming on, making but a brief stoppage at our tiny wharf; and as soon as I and my scanty baggage, with the workmen and the interpreter, were on board, the order to cast off was given, and the splash of the paddles mingled with the cheer which some of our good-natured labourers set up, while Messrs M'Phinn, Leary, and O'Dwyer stood waving their hands in token of adieu.

I was in high spirits, for not merely did the venture promise well, but the post-courier had, two days since, brought me a long letter from Kate; and the dear girl's fond words, and the often renewed assurance that she 'remembered me night and day in her thoughts and in her prayers,' had evoked her fair image before my mental vision, as if to comfort me in my exile. I had hope, too, great hope, that our engagement might prove a less protracted one than it had at first seemed likely to be, for the same mail had brought me a few lines from my godfather, Mr Grubstock, in which that eminent capitalist congratulated me on the good account of my conduct sent in by my official superior at Astrakhan, and hinted that when people returned to London, and it was possible to form a quorum, the Board would probably confirm my temporary appointment as engineer-in-chief. Let me but be successful in the present undertaking, thought I, and there will be little fear as to the speedy fruition of my hopes. These thoughts passed through my head as the red rocks and green islets of the gulf faded in the distance, and as we glided swiftly on, in a south-easterly direction, over the shining waters.

Ali Sahib, sitting a little apart from where I stood, was, with his graceful turban of pure white, his dark robe, and crimson girdle, a picturesque figure enough. Had he been of European race, I

should have guessed his age to be forty, or thereabouts, but a native of India always looks old for his years, and there were no gray hairs mingling with his long wiry moustache, and no wrinkles to mar the smoothness of his high and narrow forehead. His swarthy face wore an aspect of unusual intelligence, and his bright bead-like eyes sparkled and glowed by contrast with the bushy black eyebrows that lowered above them. I found him, as the voyage proceeded, the pattern of all possible attendants. The *Suwarrow*, like many Russian steamers, was ill provided with accommodation for passengers; the meals were a scramble, the service bad and careless, the berths none of the best; yet somehow Ali Sahib, in his unobtrusive way, took care that my hot coffee and my shaving-water should be ready to the moment; and in twenty petty matters intervened to lighten the ills inseparable from a sojourn in a slovenly vessel. His tact and temper seemed faultless, for when I was conversationally disposed, I found in him a capital talker, full of information regarding India and Persia, while he never intruded upon my meditations when I appeared to prefer to pace the deck alone. He was himself as abstemious as an anchorite, cheerfully dining on a few handfuls of rice and boiled pulse, washed down with pink sherbet, and I noticed that, contrary to the habits of most orientals, he never once indulged in the luxury of a pipe.

'Do you see that?' said Ali Sahib, one morning, as he pointed out what looked like a hovering cloud of fleecy vapour, just visible on the eastward horizon. 'That is the mountain top known as Ak-tope, or the White Hill, the only spot in the Khivan highlands where there is eternal snow. And the blue line yonder is the Persian coast, but so faintly visible that it needs an experienced eye to see where land meets water. Our captain has steered his course much to the east, meaning, probably, to touch at some port of Astrabad before standing in for Mazanderan; but so far, so good.'

My guide's conjecture proved correct, and after landing on the shore of Astrabad some bales of goods destined for that province, the *Suwarrow* rapidly coasted towards the more mountainous country of Mazanderan, and soon we could see the majestic summits of the craggy Elburz frowning high above the white beach, and the dwarf palm-trees and cane-brakes of the swampy shore. The wind was blowing freshly from the far-off steppes of Tartary and Siberia, and the dancing wavelets flashed like leaping silver in the sunbeams. Long filmy streaks of cloud stretched themselves across the hitherto unvarying azure of the sky, and to these harbingers of an approaching change of weather Ali Sahib called my attention.

'Tails and manes of Timour's wild mares!' he said, smiling; 'such, at least, is the name which the wandering Tartars give them, and they are reckoned as a certain sign that storms are about to succeed to the summer heats. Well, you English have a proverb that it is an ill wind that blows no good, and yonder poor folks are probably of the same opinion;' and as he spoke, he pointed out to me a row of fishing-craft that lay at anchor, with furled sails, under the protection of a jutting reef, but each little felucca having perched at her mast-head a scantily attired boy, whose bare limbs, as he clung to the slender spar, looked like those of a

bronze statue. 'Night and day,' explained the interpreter, in answer to my questions, 'they keep watch at this season of the year, but not for fish. This is the time when the naphtha, washed from its bed by rain and tempest, may be expected to float in glittering floods upon the surface of the Caspian. Let but a glimpse be caught of the dull glimmer, miles away, and every sail is set, and every oar out, to hurry on where jar, and gourd, and pitcher may be filled with the precious oil that Allah grants to the gleaner of the poor. So was it ever, ay, before the old days of Rustam and Afrasiab, before the days of Nushirwan the King. For times may change, and the stranger bear rule, but Persia is Persia still, and cannot alter.' And he turned his head away, muttering between his teeth some lines of a poetry that even to my unskilled ear sounded very differently from the flowery verse of Hafiz and Sadi, with which his memory was so amply stored.

We landed at Alleeabad, a little harbour at the mouth of the Amol, and nestling, as it were, under the shadow of the mighty range of the Elburz. Here Herr Gross, the German clerk, remained in company with the shipwrights, while I lost no time, under the auspices of Ali Sahib, in hiring horses, and in setting off for the interior. It is unnecessary to say more of the commercial part of my undertaking, than that my anticipations were surpassed by the amount of available timber that clothed the steep sides of the hills, and choked the narrow glens, and by the low price at which these fine trees, the oak, the elm, the walnut, the wild pear, and the mountain-ash, could be bought. The truth was that, save for the purposes of the charcoal-burners, who, like Ali Baba in the story of the *Forty Thieves*, brought their fuel by ass-loads at a time into the hamlets, where it was used for cooking, wood was in small demand. There was no means of transport by which so ponderous a commodity could be conveyed to the untimbered districts in the middle of the kingdom; whereas the streams, such as the Amol, would, when a freshet should occur, provide a speedy and economical mode of transit for the felled timber to the coast, where rafts could be built, and towing-power provided. The wood was considered as the joint property of the village communities, and it was, thanks to the patient dexterity with which Ali Sahib bargained with the elders of each petty municipality, that I succeeded in procuring the trees at a fair market-rate, while there were plenty of sharp axes, with strong arms to wield them, to be had for the hiring. Very soon we had imposing piles of timber collected on the banks of the Amol, ready to be floated down as soon as the expected rains should set in, and the mountain torrents be sufficiently swollen to yield the volume of water necessary.

I was now tempted, by the flourishing reports which my zealous interpreter gave me of the natural resources of a district yet more remote among the spurs of the Elburz, and situated at perhaps forty miles' distance from the landing-place, to make further purchases of timber on behalf of the Company, and at the same time to inspect some minerals which, although now neglected, might prove very valuable, could we obtain the royal permission to work them. This journey took us into a wilder and more romantic portion of the country than that which we had

previously traversed, and here I was astonished at the difference of manners which prevailed between the mountain peasantry and those of the lowlands. The water-pipes, the invariable adjuncts of an ordinary Persian divan, grew scarcer as I proceeded, and the fragrant scent of the 'rose-leaf' tobacco more and more rare. In some of the hamlets which we entered the women's faces were unveiled, though they ran shrieking to assume their coarse yashmaks as soon as they espied a stranger. In some of the cottages, I was surprised to see a small lamp, of antique shape, kept incessantly burning in a sort of niche, such as that in which, in the south of Europe, tapers flicker before the image of some patron saint; and once when I carelessly extinguished a candle by blowing at the flame, my hosts for the time being, who were a widow and her children, set up a cry of horror, and were duly chidden for this act of insubordination by my guide, who, however, excused them gently enough to me, on the ground of their being poor and untaught people, among whom a leaven of ancient superstition yet lingered.

One thing was clear: Ali Sahib's popularity among this simple race seemed unbounded. The peasants were courteous to me, but there was something of veneration in the manner in which they accosted him which almost puzzled me. I remembered, however, that in the East, holiness and learning are synonyms, and that, no doubt, the moonshee's elaborate education appeared marvellous in the eyes of these primitive foresters. I admit that he did much to win the good-will of those around him, writing at their request, with magnificent flourishes of his reed pen as it traversed the thin rice-paper, their long-projected letters to sons who were grooms or tent-pitchers at Teheran, adjusting disputes as to landmarks or inheritances, reconciling sullen husbands to sharp-tongued wives, and gaining the confidence, as it seemed, of all children. He could recite poetry, too, to an extent unparalleled among Europeans, and would repeat the tales of Mejnoun, or some wondrous stories of jinns, afreets, magicians, tyrants, princesses, and hidden treasures, with a hundred auditors hanging breathless on his lips as he proceeded in the narrative. As for the promised minerals, the specimens which were brought to me were rich enough to merit a careful scrutiny of the spot whence the hematite, the pyrites, and the copper had been of old extracted. I therefore started for the mountains, guided by an intelligent peasant, who bore in his hand a pole spiked with iron, 'good,' as he told me, 'to beat off the bears and wolves that prowled in winter about the sheepfolds,' and which aided him to bound across the many threads of water, often with deep channels and rocky banks, that intercepted our course. Ibrahim, the villager in question, was a fine strong young fellow, lately married, and one of the richest peasants in the hamlet, and there was nothing cringing or servile in his demeanour, which was frank and kind. I found myself able to converse with him with tolerable ease, since he was a proficient in Turkish, having been kidnapped by the Uzbegs and sold as a slave at Khiva, whence he had been ransomed by his family; and I was thus able to eke out my growing stock of Persian words with the more familiar language of our labourers at Kizil-Batch.

As we reached the rocky glen where the abandoned mines—worked, so my guide informed me,



in the days of Soliman-ben-Daoud, but guarded now by malignant spirits, who would never allow men to do more than pick up a few pebbles above-ground—I heard the far-away clash of cymbals, the notes of a barbaric trumpet, and the low, hoarse beating of drums, mingling with the clatter of steel. My companion started, and shook his clenched hand, in the attitude of one who utters a malediction, in the direction whence the sounds came.

‘What is wrong?’ I inquired, hesitatingly.

‘The soldiers—the Persian troops,’ answered Ibrahim, with a dark look. ‘This must be the camp of Mirza Hussein, the young brother of the prince-governor of the province. I heard that he and his were ranging the country, eating up the substance of honest folk themselves, and swaggering and scoffing at our rustic ways and plain fashions. I like not to know that these greedy troopers are our neighbours. We shall need to keep a watchful eye on garden and henroost, and well if they get no pretext for harrying us out of house and home, as they did at Kara-Serai a month since.’

But my curiosity was strongly excited at hearing that a Persian military force was close at hand, and I had no fancy for withdrawing until I should have had a nearer view of the encampment, whither Ibrahim, after some grumbling, consented to accompany me. On the road, I asked him whether he really conceived that we incurred any peril by approaching the troops, or whether his dislike to them was entirely founded on his experience of the pilfering propensities inherent in the ill-paid soldiery of an oriental monarch. He made answer, with a smoothness that seemed constrained after his late outburst, that he could hardly tell; that a Feringhee like myself, with his papers in perfect order, would be respected by any government official, and that the only risk incurred by a peasant like himself was that of being impressed to do a certain amount of labour, gratis, at carpet-beating, drawing water, or the like. At the same time the presence of such a force imposed heavy burdens upon the country that had to support it; and the women must stay within doors, and the beehives be hidden, and the oil-jars buried, and the cattle kept from straying, so long as stragglers from the camp were on the look-out for opportunities of plunder. And now we came in sight of the camp itself, white tents and green ones, each surmounted by a ball of gilt pith; while in front of those gaudier pavilions which were the property of the chiefs, spears had been stuck into the turf, and grooms stood holding horses gorgeously caparisoned.

It was not a very large array, perhaps consisting of a thousand cavalry, and twice that number of foot; but there were also camels and cannon, and that accumulation of camp-followers which, from the time of Xerxes downwards, has hampered the efficiency, while adding to the picturesqueness of eastern armies. The wild strains of the oriental music floated on the breeze, and the flutter of flags and the blending of colours, lent a certain charm to the scene. Most of the horses were picketed, but three or four small troops of riders were careering about, sportively discharging their fire-locks, or darting their lances at an imaginary foe. As we drew nearer to the camp, one of these parties seemed to catch sight of us, and immediately rode

towards us. As the Persian cavalcade approached, I took particular notice of the leader, an officer of rank, to judge by the splendour of his equipments, mounted on a powerful chestnut steed of Turcoman race, that pranced and curveted as he came on. This chieftain was a large-built man, a head taller than any of his followers; his broad chest blazed like the noonday sun, covered as it was with cloth of gold and jewels; and a crimson shawl, fringed with gold, was fastened to the back of his high conical cap of black lamb's-wool, and fell upon his brawny shoulders. The purple trappings of his horse were gorgeous with silver embroidery; and the broad bridle was hung all over with golden coins, and amulets of silver and coral, and cowries, and tufts of the fleecy hair of the Tibet yak, and jingled at every step. He had a jewelled scimitar slung round him by a scarlet cord, and in his right hand he carried a bundle of those stout javelins in casting which the Persians are traditionally expert. Such was Yussef Khan, who, as Ibrahim said, was not to be trusted.

As poor Ibrahim spoke, a blunt-headed djereed came whistling through the air, forcibly flung by the practised arm of El Zagal, and struck him in the face with such violence as to dash him, stunned and bleeding, to the ground, while the brutal aggressor and his obsequious train joined in a horse-laugh of unfeeling exultation at the success of the practical joke.

Yussef Khan was now so near that I could perfectly distinguish his swarthy features, animated by an expression of mingled vanity and ferocity. A broad, flat face it was, denoting his origin to be from a Turcoman source rather than from the pure old Persian stock; and he wore a forked beard, and wiry moustache of a reddish tint, while his large mouth was garnished with a set of strong white teeth that a cannibal might have envied. There were scars on his tanned cheek, and his whole aspect was that of a fighting bully, not of Pistol or Parolles, harmless impostors as they were, but of Bobadil or Drawcansir rather, a warrior whose heart had been hardened by a life of easy triumphs and unpunished outrage. But I was not long permitted quietly to scrutinise the truculent countenance of El Zagal.

‘Hollo, there, you dog without a saint, are you a Feringhee, or only a trencher-scraping Armenian?’ roared out the khan, reining up his steed. This polite address was simple enough to be comprehensible even to so poor a Persian scholar as myself; and I replied, as patiently as I could, stating my nationality and my errand, and offering to submit my papers for the inspection of a competent authority.

‘What’s all that jargon about firmans and passports?’ growled El Zagal. ‘If I’d my own way’—and then came something which I could not understand, but which provoked the ready laughter of his followers—‘your passport would be made out for Jehanum, my fine fellow. Ingliz, are you? What can you do? Can you catch this?’ And he rose in his stirrups, and hurled another of his pointless javelins at me with a force that would at the least have inflicted a severe bruise; but with a cricketer’s instinct, I turned it aside by a quick motion of my arm, and it fell idly on the turf beyond. This time the laugh was rather against the bullying khan, for another party of cavaliers from the camp had now ridden up, and these

seemed to stand in less awe of him than did his immediate escort.

As for myself, however, I felt in anything but a merry mood ; for I began to apprehend the consequences of having mortified the self-conceit of a vain and fierce man. The khan's face grew very dark, and his moustache bristled like the hair of an angry boar, as he glared on the Frank who had dared to baffle his unerring aim. Twice his muscular right hand clutched at the hilt of his scimitar ; and had we been alone, I have no doubt that it would have gone hard with me, unarmed and on foot as I was. Fortunately, however, there arrived on the scene a very young and slightly made man, mounted on a noble Arab horse, and wearing a gold-laced uniform varying but little from the European pattern. This was Mirza Hussein, general of the military force near to whose encampment I had ventured, and brother to the prince-governor. His clear-cut features and straight profile, no less than his slender frame, contrasted strongly with those of the khan, and bespoke him as a genuine Iranee of the pure race. The sight of El Zagal, vapouring in his wrath, of poor Ibrahim, now sitting up and staring stupidly about him, while the blood trickled down his face ; of the javelins that lay upon the ground, and of a strange European in apparent altercation with the khan, seemed to tell the whole tale to the quick-witted young Persian. He said something to El Zagal which caused the latter to fall back a pace or two ; and then, to my delight, addressed me in French, which he spoke with tolerable fluency. I briefly told him my name and nation, as well as what had occurred, offering at the same time my passport and credentials for his inspection ; but he courteously waved them back ; and after exchanging a word or two with those around, he again addressed me, and this time with marked kindness.

'I am sorry, monsieur,' said Mirza Hussein gently, 'that you should have met with so rough a reception here. We are not much used to travellers ; and our valiant friend, the khan there, is a little hot and overhasty ; but luckily I arrived in time to redeem our Persian repute for hospitality. If you will grace me by accompanying me to my poor tent—give the Frank a horse, somebody !—I shall be glad of the opportunity of conversing with an Englishman, a pleasure I have not enjoyed since I left the capital for these uncivilised regions. —You, too, good fellow,' he added in Persian to Ibrahim, who had now regained his feet, 'may come with us ; and I daresay we can find a plaster for that knock in the face.—You can ride ?' he continued, as an attendant led up a snorting gray steed, with a blue demipique saddle ; 'but of course you can, for you are English'—which last words were uttered as I put my foot into the shovel-shaped stirrup, and sprang on the back of the gray Turcoman.—'And now let us make our way comfortably to the camp.'

A very polite and elegant young fellow was this juvenile prince ; and as I sat beside him, at his special invitation, on the soft crimson carpet, beneath the many-coloured canopy of his splendid pavilion, waited on by Nubian slaves in snowy tunics and turbans, who brought us coffee and pipes, as well as sweetmeats, fruit, and iced sherbets, on trays of embossed silver, I could scarcely realise to myself that I had been but a few

minutes before assailed, insulted, and in danger of my life. Yet there, at some little distance, among a crowd of officers, sat Yussef Khan, the Left-handed or Unlucky, furtively scowling at me as he inhaled the fragrance of the Shiraz tobacco through the long snaky tube of his richly adorned kalioon. The prince told me in French, but speaking in an undertone, that El Zagal was a truculent old savage, only tolerated on account of his exploits against the Afghans and the Turcomans, but that he was still in favour with the so-called Old Persian party, or opponents of reform, and had thus been appointed to command a part of the troops under Mirza Hussein's orders. 'As for myself,' added the young commander gaily, 'I need not tell you that I go heart and soul with the new opinions and the new ways. I have had the advantage of a Frankish education—two years in Paris ; *mon cher* M. Masterton, conceive you that !—and I am lost here in these barbarous mountains, and surrounded by dull sticklers for a literal observance of the Koran precepts. I am ashamed to offer you these sorry sherbets—it should be foaming champagne were we but snugly in Teheran—but here, in public, we must be careful of appearances. I hope to see great changes yet ; but we must be prudent, or we clash with prejudices deeply rooted in the popular mind.'

Thus this Gallicised specimen of Iranee aristocracy prattled on, saying ten words for every one of mine ; and when at length he would allow me to leave him, he kissed the tips of his fingers and waved them towards me, saying gaily : 'Adieu, monsieur ; and believe me, should we meet again, I shall retain a *bon souvenir* of this charming conversation. But of that there is, *hélas* ! not much prospect, unless you are persuaded to visit the capital, whither I hope to be allowed to return so soon as our present mission—which is hardly to the taste of a gentleman and a soldier—is accomplished. And that—but I must not blab state secrets—*foi de Hussein* !—will not, I trust, be long. Give me joy, M. Masterton, on my chance of soon emancipating myself from this tedious banishment !'

Exchanging salaams with the remainder of the company, I now left the prince's pavilion, and presently quitted the camp, accompanied by Ibrahim, who had by Mirza Hussein's orders been clad in a new robe of fine blue cloth, and who had also been indemnified for the rough treatment which he had received by the gift of 'a purse of silver,' or about five pounds sterling. This liberality had, however, had no effect in dispelling the sullen gloom which had succeeded to his habitual good-humour ; and as we gained the crest of the hill, and took our last look back at the gay tents of the military, the peasant ground his teeth and clenched his fist with an expression of bitter but impotent rage. He said but little on our homeward road ; and when, on entering the village, we found Ali Sahib, wondering at our long absence, waiting for us, and ready to inform me of the excellent bargain which he, as my representative, had made with the head-men of the rural community, I could see him start and look uneasy as he observed the dejection of my guide. He put no questions to Ibrahim, however ; but telling me cheerfully that dinner was waiting, and that he had ventured in my name to invite the elders of the village to a little feast in honour of the negotiation, he led the way back to the house where I was lodged, and

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where I found a long low table groaning under the weight of smoking hot pilaffs, kabobs, soups, and various unknown preparations of fish, flesh, and vegetables, among which I was amused at recognising a dear old friend of my schooldays—a dish of cucumbers, stuffed, with rice and minced mutton; while round the table, on cushions and dressed sheepskins, sat ten or twelve of the notables of the hamlet, all of whom rose up as I entered, and lifting their hands so as to shade their eyes, cried with one voice: 'Well seen, protector of the poor! Welcome to the Englishman, the founder of the feast!'

## ODDS AND ENDS:

FROM DR ROBERT CHAMBERS'S SCRAP-BOOK.

**BISHOP LOWE'S ANECDOTES.**—March 21, 1853. I have to-day visited Bishop Lowe, now in his eighty-eighth year. He lives in the same plain apartments in the old priory of Pittenweem, where I first found him in 1826; rather like an old ascetic than a modern priest; dressing very poorly in old, worn, greased black clothes. Although much shrunk and fallen off, there is still much life in his handsome old face and keen gray eyes. When, in 1790, he came to live in this part of Fife, where he presides over a small congregation of Scottish Episcopalians, there was a thick neighbourhood of gentry, with all of whom he was a frequent guest, often living with them for weeks at a time. There was much homely hospitality, four being the dinner-hour, and if a friend called in the forenoon, he was sure to be pressed to stay to dinner, *sans cérémonie*. Now, there is a great change in this respect, nothing but set invitations for a comparatively late dinner. The neighbourhood, too, is much thinner of resident gentry.

As an intense Jacobite, the bishop had picked up a store of anecdotes concerning the House of Stuart and its adherents; some of his stories, though trifling enough, were amusing in their way, and in nearly all cases seasoned with a degree of humorous causticity. I, from time to time, took notes of the anecdotes he was in the habit of relating. [Already several have been given in these *Odds and Ends*. The following are a few others.]

**A FISHERMAN'S REPARTEE.**—General Anstruther, who represented the East of Fife burghs at the time of the Porteous Mob, gained unpopularity by voting for the bill against the city of Edinburgh. Having to go south, he deemed it imprudent to cross the Firth by the usual ferry, and pass to Edinburgh direct; so he got a couple of stout fishermen and a boat at Elie, and crossed to East Lothian. On the passage, he fell into conversation with the two men. 'Well, I suppose you fellows are all great smugglers?' 'Ou, ay,' said one of them dryly; 'but I dinna think we ever smuggled a general before!'

**A VENERABLE SPINSTER.**—The bishop tells an affecting story of an ancient Miss Pitcairn of Forthar, who was a member of his congregation at Pittenweem some sixty years ago, and who lived in greatly reduced circumstances, having literally but fifteen pounds a year to depend upon. He nevertheless occasionally dined with her—the fare a fish, and a bottle of small ale. At length, Lady Anne Erskine of Kelly, interested in her on

account of her name (for Lady Anne's mother was a Pitcairn, daughter of the celebrated wit of that name), wrote to Dr Pitcairn, who was then in high practice in London, giving him an account of this venerable member of his clan, and, in short, entreating some assistance for her. This respectable man at once yielded to the prayer by granting her an annuity of ten pounds, which, of course, was to her all the difference between penury and comfort. The bishop went to dine with her and break the joyful news. After dinner, he produced a bottle of wine, which he said he had brought, because he had a particular health to propose. He said: 'I have to propose to you, madam, that we drink a bumper of that generous liquor to a man who deserves to have his health drunk in the best we have. I mean Dr Pitcairn of London, who has settled upon you an annuity that will make you comfortable for life—namely, ten pounds!' The poor old lady was overpowered with joy, and could sleep none that night.

**ROSS OF PITCALINE** [the poor broken-down Jacobite laird, of whom some droll anecdotes have been related] lived in Edinburgh, and was often in great straits for a meal. Happening one night to pass the house of Sir Lawrence Dundas, in St Andrew Square [now the building occupied as the Royal Bank of Scotland], the poor laird bethought him of a method of obtaining a handsome refreshment at the expense of that gentleman. Sir Lawrence was the candidate for the representation of Edinburgh in parliament, and he had succeeded in obtaining the favour of a certain number of the town-councillors, in whom the election lay. There was one councillor, however, a deacon of one of the crafts, who was essential to his cause, and whom he had assailed with every imaginable temptation, but as yet in vain. Pitcaline, aware that Sir Lawrence was confined to his chamber with gout, knocked at the door, and said something which led the servant to suppose he was the difficult-to-be-secured deacon. When the candidate heard who it was, his delight was great, and he gave orders that his visitor should be treated with the best in the house, while the excuse of illness was made for his not appearing himself. Set down to a pleasant repast, Pitcaline commenced by a request for a bottle of champagne and another of Madeira, and so he spent a couple of hours or so very much to his satisfaction. Having finished, when he could eat and drink no more, being stuffed to the throat, he departed by leaving his compliments—the compliments of Ross of Pitcaline to Sir Lawrence. The wrath and disappointment of the candidate may be left to the imagination of the reader.

**PETER LOGIE.**—Among the insurgents who escaped from Culloden was a little club-footed man called Peter Logie. Balmamoon used to tell that Peter, lame as he was, got home to Angus six-and-thirty hours before himself, who had no such impediment. Being afterwards seized and put under examination, he was asked: 'And what situation did you hold in the Pretender's service?' 'I was his Royal Highness's dancing-master,' was Peter's contemptuous reply. He survived to keep an inn on one of the principal north roads, and it is related that a certain Lady Grant, who visited the inn in passing, had a child some time afterwards who had a club-foot—a consequence, it was supposed, of her imagination being impressed by Peter's

defect. The husband, next time he came there, jocularly accused Peter of being the cause of his child having a club-foot. 'Weel,' said Peter, 'ye canna say I gave it its nose though;' the fact being that the child resembled its parent in having hardly any trace of that feature.

**A RESOLUTE FATHER.**—Some one, observing a man of ninety in the Highland army of 1715, asked him how he, so old and feeble, could think of joining an enterprise in which he could render no active service. 'Whee, sir,' said the old man, who was from the head of Aberdeenshire, 'I ha'e oyes [grandchildren] here, and I ha'e sons; and if they dinna dee their duty, can I no shoot them?'

**DIFFICULTY ABOUT A TOAST.**—At a meeting of the Fife magistrates some years after 1745, a Whig gentleman gave as a toast 'the Duke of Cumberland.' David Beatoun of Kilconquhar, a zealous Jacobite, immediately after proposed 'James Sibbald, the butcher of Colnesburgh,' to the great indignation of his Whig neighbour, who said he must decline to do so much honour to a common tradesman. 'Sir,' said Kilconquhar sternly, 'I've drunk your butcher, and you'll either drink mine, or be put over the window!'

**INCIDENT IN THE '45.**—Mrs Moir of Leckie, who was a daughter of Stewart of Ardsheel, commander of the Appin regiment, used to tell that she was born in a kiln. Her mother had been obliged to retire to such a humble place of refuge, by the cruelty of the king's soldiers, who plundered and burnt the house, though she was at the point of being taken with the pains of labour. Mrs Moir used further to declare that the officers who had destroyed the house, had asked for silver spoons for their dinner, promising upon their honour to return them, but that they neglected to perform their promise. The spoons were carried off. Bishop Lowe asserts that many of the officers commanding parties sent to destroy the houses of the rebels after Culloden, were so mean as to pilfer silver spoons and other valuable articles. [Keeping in remembrance the picture of military subaltern officers presented in the fictions of Fielding and Smollett, these remarks do not excite surprise.]

**SIR MICHAEL M—**, being in early life a portionless younger son, became a joiner in London, and it was his fortune to act as undertaker for the poor rebel lords in 1746. His good figure, as he stood on the scaffold at Tower Hill, attracted the regards of a niece of Lord Bathurst, who married him, and brought him £300 a year. Sir Michael had been poorly educated, and sometimes amused his friends by his ignorance. A witty shoemaker of Kirkcaldy, being brought before him, and condemned to a fortnight's confinement in the Tol-booth, affected to challenge the terms of the act of parliament on which the judgment proceeded, and which had been cited by the clerk. He asked Sir Michael to translate the words into English. 'Give that fellow other two months for contempt of court,' cried the baronet.

**LORD PITSLIGO.**—When Lord Pitsligo, who had been concerned in the rebellion of '45, was under hiding at Auchiries House, about five miles from Fraserburgh, the commander of a regiment stationed there received intelligence of the fact from some evil-minded person, and found himself, much against his will, compelled to make a search. He

had the address, however, to let the afternoon be pretty far advanced before making his approach, judging that the unfortunate nobleman might have the better opportunity of making his escape. It was night before his party reached the house. After stationing a soldier at every door and window, as was usual in such cases, he and some of the officers entered, and walked up-stairs towards a room in which Lord Pitsligo was said to be. On their tapping at the door, Lady Pitsligo came, and, seeing the soldiers, fainted away. This was a fortunate event, for common politeness seemed to command their attention to the lady, and, by obeying its call, they easily gave the lord time to escape. His lordship, on first learning the cause of the disturbance, pushed up the window and looked out, with the intention of hazarding his life by a jump. To his great consternation, he saw a soldier below, but was presently restored by the generous fellow saying softly: 'Jump, my lord—I shall stoop and not see you.' The aged nobleman accordingly jumped on the man's head, and got clear off.

[Bishop Lowe, the venerable narrator of these anecdotes, died at the Priory, Pittenweem, aged eighty-nine, January 26, 1854.]

#### LIVINGSTONE.

It is finished! We shall gaze upon that dauntless form no more:  
The dust that once was Livingstone alone shall reach our shore.  
He has perished where no aid was—not a kindred spirit near;  
Not a word of friendly counsel to salute his dying ear!  
Perished, with his hopes unsated, and his work still incomplete,  
Afric's burning sky above him, and her deserts 'neath his feet!  
Who may say what tender longings filled his lonely heart at last?  
Thoughts of home and well-loved faces, visions of the sacred Past!  
Yet we may not mourn the end that fitly closed so grand a life,  
Nor begrudge him rest so welcome, wearied with a glorious strife.  
He has fallen as falls the soldier, scorning to the last to yield:  
Sternly fighting, still unconquered, prone upon the battle-field.  
Not for *him* the gradual failing that the feebleness knows;  
Not for *him* the slow decadence which from meaner purpose flows!  
His to labour ever onward in Humanity's just cause;  
His to stride the lonely path where Duty led without a pause;  
His amid the forest wilds to dare an ever-present death;  
For the welfare of his fellows to expend his latest breath.  
Never in the blaze of battle was a truer hero seen,  
Mid the swoop of hostile squadrons and the sabre's blinding sheen.  
Such a life and such a death shall wreath a glory round his name  
That shall brighten unborn ages, and illumine the scroll of Fame!

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